

Coming to near you soon – lights,

Ipswich's iconic locations

With negotiations set to begin soon, Ipswich Borough Council's visitor experience manager **Steven Allman** talked us through some of the locations that would be perfect for filmmakers.

■ “Christchurch Mansion and the surrounding park would be ideal for period dramas. The house itself is Tudor in origin but contains a host of treasures inside. The park and its formal ponds and arboreta could likewise bring an historic feel to any film.”

■ “Fore Street Pool could be used for any filmmaker seeking a Victorian sports theme. The baths opened in 1894 and has an iconic exterior and elegant interior.”

■ “The Willis building (Willis Towers Watson, to give it its proper name) is another iconic landmark in the town centre – it is a modern grade-I listed building that defies its 41 years. Lord Foster's design is hailed the world over.”



■ “The Town Hall and its magnificent entrance hall and staircase is also well suited to Victorian dramas or a sumptuous ball scene – this magnificent building is the focal point of Suffolk's county town. The Old Custom House and the Unitarian Meeting House are likewise historic gems.”

■ “The Waterfront lends itself to contemporary films or TV. From the Jerwood Dancehouse down to the university, this “new landscape” with its forest of yacht masts and restaurants and bars, was likened by a former Prime Minister as looking like the south of France!”

■ “The 1930s feel to the Ipswich Art School Gallery's grand exhibition space, with viewing walkways above, lends itself to a futuristic setting. The gallery is part of Ipswich Museum, itself open to any number of possibilities for an imaginative filmmaker.”

■ “Further afield, the Royal Hospital School could lend itself to a naval engagement – right here in Suffolk. The Orwell and the Stour provide stunning backdrops to any scene.”



Jason Noble

jason.noble@archant.co.uk

Christchurch Mansion, Fore Street Swimming Pool and the Town Hall are just a handful of Ipswich's prestigious buildings set to be opened up for filming as part of the Screen Suffolk deal under latest plans by town bosses.

Following a meeting of Ipswich Borough Council's executive last week, the borough is set to begin discussions with Film Fixer – the contract holder for Screen Suffolk – to open up Ipswich locations for filming.

And the firm already has a catalogue of more than 16 locations around town earmarked which will be promoted at its official launch in London in front of top production companies tomorrow, as part of 150 locations across the county to be launched.

From there, other locations will regularly be added to the portfolio.

In July Suffolk County Council

“We are seeking to build closer relationships with film-makers to better promote our county town and the rest of Suffolk

David Ellesmere

announced a tie up with location firm, which has worked on blockbusters including *Star Wars* and *Jason Bourne*, in a bid to up the number of filming days in the county from 50 to more than 300.

Film Fixer, which will operate the contract for the county as Screen Suffolk, will help encourage filmmakers to come to the county – and Ipswich leaders are hoping some of the town's most picturesque parks and buildings alongside a few surprise entries will be among those making their way onto the silver screen.

Borough council leader David Ellesmere said: “We are seeking to build closer relationships with film-makers to better promote our county town and the rest of Suffolk.

“Ipswich is proud of its heritage

Ipswich High School for Girls



■ Ipswich High School for Girls is one of the locations which will feature in the Screen Suffolk deal in London.

Photos: FILM FIXER

The Grade I-listed Woolverstone Hall – the centrepiece of the high school – has unsurprisingly been picked up by Film Fixer for its grand presence. The Palladian mansion built in 1776 for William Berners is today a focal point for young girls being educated at the school.

A spokeswoman for the school added: “Not only does the building boast extraordinary 18th Century architecture and details, it is located on an 84 acre riverside school campus with stunning views of the River Orwell and the surrounding Shotley peninsula. It is no wonder our school is enjoyed by our pupils from the pre-prep right through to sixth form and is frequently hired for weddings and celebratory events.”





cameras and action of Hollywood?



and its many beautiful locations, such as Christchurch and Chantry mansions and the Waterfront, and we look forward to seeing more of them on screen in the future.

"Private Peaceful was filmed here in recent years but we would like to see Ipswich appear on the film credits more often."

Among those the deal would facilitate would be historic buildings such as Christchurch Mansion, parks such as Holywells and Christchurch and council-land along Ipswich's Waterfront, as well as residential and shopping areas.

But as well as using the familiar landmarks as filming locations, Film Fixer also hopes to entice entire production teams to use empty office space in the town as production offices.

Karen Everett, director, Screen Suffolk, said: "Making Ipswich's empty office space available as production office space to filmmakers, is a good way of encouraging more production spend in the county.

"We will be promoting Ipswich buildings as locations, yes. But we will also suggest office space allowing productions to base themselves here for the duration of a shoot - for perhaps as long as six weeks or more. From a production base, nearby loca-

Suburbs

Far from just collating a bank of some of Ipswich's most well-known areas, some key residential streets have been identified for suburb locations.

Among those on the launch list will be Didsbury Close, Lakeside Drive and Radcliffe Drive.

And those in Greenfinch Avenue or Manchester Road may also find Hollywood stars on their doorstep for suburb-style locations.

tions would be used. Being so close to London, we think filmmakers will believe this makes perfect sense.

"We know that Suffolk has all the wow-factor locations a production could need, whether it's backdrops to the next *Harry Potter*, TV police procedural, Hollywood style thriller, or lower-budget English heart-warmer. The more generic-looking office space, though, could be the icing on the cake to productions looking for somewhere to set themselves up - as well as film locally.

"With the production based here -

it would spend more budget here, be it on catering, accommodation, transport, art department and design services, costume and makeup, and all the other needs a production has."

The borough council report added: "The UK film and television industry is a successful sector and through the Suffolk Film Plan feasibility study has been identified as a key sector with growth potential. Over the two years of funded support Screen Suffolk's objectives are to provide production services for film and TV companies filming in Suffolk, and, support businesses in this sector."

Other benefits to bringing filming to the county include opportunities for student filmmakers to get involved, economic boost for local catering, accommodation and retail firms and an upturn in tourism income.

Alongside filming for TV series and films, the Screen Suffolk deal will also arrange filming locations in the county for adverts and websites.

→ **Where in Ipswich do you think would make a great location for filming? Share your thoughts by emailing newsroom@archant.co.uk or write to Ipswich Star letters, Portman House, 120 Princes Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 1RS.**

Town centre

From the modern developments of the Buttermarket to the historic Fore Street, Film Fixer has identified town centre locations both old and new for its launch list. For the new-style buildings, the entrance to the Buttermarket off St Stephen's Lane, Buttermarket Street,

Westgate Street, Tacket Street and around the Willis building will all be on the launch list being shown to top production companies in London. And its catalogue of older town-centre streets is headlined by Fore Street, The Walk, King Street, Museum Street and Dial Lane.



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